



Bills & Budgets Move Through Chambers

by Dawn A. Randolph, MPA
February 1, 2016



Session Schedule this week

The legislature will be in Monday-Thursday with floor activity in both Chambers in the morning and lots of committee meetings in the afternoon. Since this is the second year of the biennial session votes have begun on bills that made it through the committee process last session in the Senate but did not get a vote by the last day or were tabled for this year. The House has not started their Rules Calendar yet to start voting on the floor.

Budget Update

The House passed the Amended FY 2016 budget last Thursday with few changes from the Governor's recommendations. The Senate subcommittees began meeting on Monday and could have it to the full Senate for a vote by the end of next week. The Senate Human Development Committee meet late Monday afternoon to hear from all the agency officials. GVRA presented the same information provided to the House Committee. Senator Renee Unterman (R-Buford), committee chair, requested all Senators have their recommendations to her by Thursday this week.

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Special
Announcements



GATES Board Meeting

Friday
February 5, 2016
10:00 AM
Center for the
Visually Impaired
739 West
Peachtree Street,
Atlanta, GA

The House begins working on the FY 2017 full budget. The House Human Resources Subcommittee of Appropriations begins work on Thursday, Feb 4th at 2pm with a public hearing on FY 2017 to take testimony on behavioral health, vocational rehabilitation and social services issues in room 403 of the Legislative Office Building across from the Capitol. The same House Human Resources Committee is then scheduled to meet next Monday, February 8, 2016 to hear from each agency official from 1-3pm in room 341 at the Capitol.

You can view the Governor's Budgets online [here](#). You can also follow budget tracking documents for the House [here](#) and the Senate [here](#). Tracking documents show the changes at each stage of the budget process.

Senate Bills

No Senate bills of interest under consideration or introduced at this time.

House Bills

Rep. Don Parsons (R-Marietta) bill [HB 201](#) to update the law governing the "**telephone system for the physically impaired**" passed the House on March 13, 2015 by a vote of 169-0. Although the bill received a vote on Crossover Day the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee never gave it a hearing. It is now awaiting consideration by the Senate Committee.

As a result of several House Study Committees and the strong advocacy of many in the disability community several key members of House leadership have signed on to support [HB 768](#). The Georgia ABLE legislation (Achieving a Better Life Experience) will allow families to create and contribute to tax-exempt accounts that can fund qualified expenses to support people with disabilities. The bill has been assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee.

Representative Tom Kirby (R-Loganville) and several others on both sides of the aisle are supporting [HB 796](#) to enhance the rights and responsibilities for service animals. While the bill defines fines up to \$2,000 and up to 30 days in prison for those impeding the rights of individuals accompanied by a service animal it also cleans up language and broadens the rights from service and guide dogs to all service animals. The bill has been assigned to the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee and awaits consideration.

A bill has been introduced to exempt housing for people with physical disability from the ad valorem tax. Representative Spencer Frye (D-Athens) introduced [HB 809](#) last week on January 25, 2016. The bill has been assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee.

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Study Committees

Rep. Penny Houston has introduced [HR 979](#) to create a House Study Committee to examine programs that provide reading services to the blind and visually impaired. The Study Committee would be comprised of seven members; including four Representatives, The PSC Executive Director, The Director of the Board of Regents Public Library Service, and a representative of the Center for the Visually Impaired. The Resolution has been assigned to the Special Rules Committee. If the Study Committee is approved it must publish its report by December 1, 2016.

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Call for Information

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